

A Short Memorandum

By

Pfc. Hubert Wesselman

3rd Platoon, L Company, 354th Infantry

89th Division, United States Army

1918—1919

Transcribed from his war diary

by his daughter

Frances Laura Wesselman Ourada

2008

WESTERN FRONT, 1918

ST. MIHIEL OFFENSIVE

Situation 12 September and Operations
to 16 September

0 5 10
SCALE OF MILES





Prelude

My name is Frances Laura Wesselman Ourada. I am the oldest daughter of Hubert Joseph Wesselman and I am writing this in 2008. Dad never talked about the war and I was not aware of his war diary until Mom died in 1979. My siblings, Clarence, Irma, Lenora and I were closing up her house at which time Dad's diary surfaced. I eventually inherited all of Dad's World War I documents and Mom's picture albums containing his war pictures. Nothing was done until years later when I got my computer. He had written his diary in indelible pencil and I felt compelled to copy it so his future extended family would enjoy it also.

The following is copied from the diary Dad starting writing when he was inducted on April 27, 1918 at Littleton, Colorado until he was discharged on June 13, 1919 at Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming. He was a Private in 3rd Platoon, Company L, 354th Infantry, 89th Division. He participated in battles at St. Mihiel Offensive September 12 - 16, 1918; Meuse Argonne Offensive October 19 to November 11, 1918; Lucey Sector August 8 to September 11, 1918, and Euvezin Sector September 10 to December 7, 1918. [These dates are taken and copied exactly from his Discharge Papers, and note the discrepancy in order of dates of battles.]

He didn't always use punctuation, so for clarity, I have added some. He never uses paragraphs, so have added some, again for clarity. Parentheses “()” are his and square brackets “[]” are my added comments. For instance I added [sp] after a misspelled word {...?..} means a word I absolutely cannot make out. It is entitled: “A Short Memorandum”. Images captioned with “Wesselman archives” are from documents and photos I have in my possession. Any other photos came from other sources in the public domain. All were inserted in appropriate places to enhance Dad's written experiences.

At this time I would like to thank my good friend, Larry Cole, who has generously donated his research expertise to find photos and other documents as well as his computer expertise to incorporate them into Dad's diary. Larry's contributions unbelievably helps the reader experience World War I through Dad's eyes as well as all Doughboys who served in this war. Without Larry, this diary would not be as complete as it is now.

And now I am proud to present “A Short Memorandum.”

Frances Laura Wesselman Ourada

2008





Pc. Hubert Wesselman, United States Army, Allied Expeditionary Force, 1918
(photo from Wesselman archives)



"The 29th of June we packed our grip [suitcase] and left camp for Boston, 73 men of L Co on casual from all over the 89 Div. The Co left the June the first and left us behind in Detention Camp for measles.

We arrived at Boston, Mass. June 30. Had coffee and buns from the Red Cross. Got aboard [sp] the boat at 10 o'clock and in a few hrs steamed out of the harbour. It was foggy but still had to stay below Decks so nobody from land could see that it was a transport. 30 minutes out the boys started to feed the fish which I could see. I saw several big sharks. 2 days out they were about 6 feet long. We wondered how we would ever get to France [sp] as we always went North, so the third day we steamed into Halifax Harbour [sp harbor]. We went there to get with the convoy, we and three more ships. We staid [sp] there till July the 4th at 4 o'clock then pulled out for across the pond [Atlantic]. I saw many sharks of all discriptions [sp] while at Halifax, saw my first U boat, also saw where the ammunition boat exploded. It sure took the buildings away only leaving the cellars and some foundations.

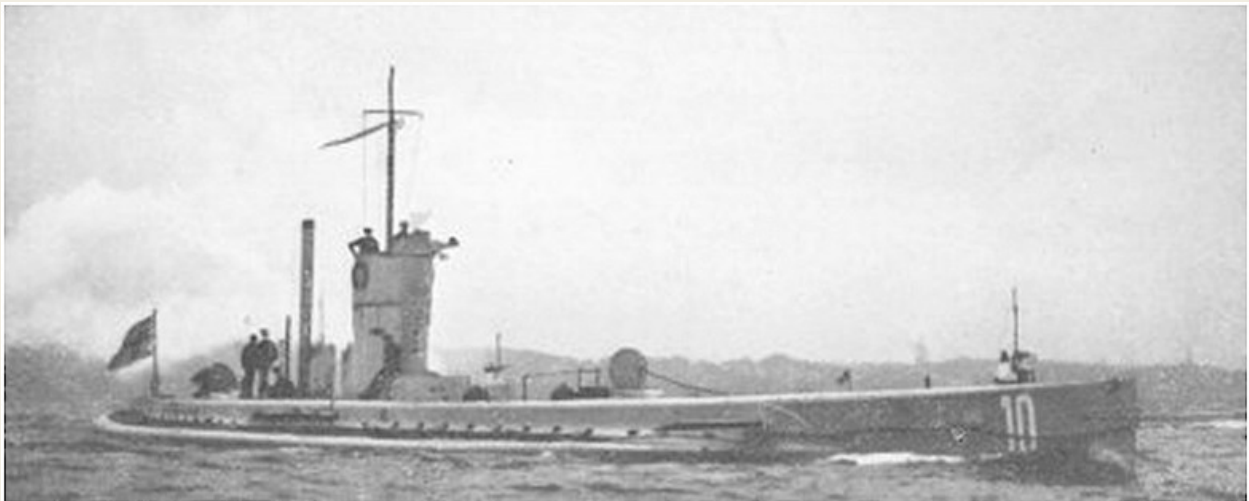
"There were 14 Transport and one Battleship in the Convoy. There sure was a lot of water to be seen and nothing else only fish and birds which we saw all the way



Halifax, Nova Scotia after the ammunition ship exploded

across. I was put in the center of the boat to sleep and had a bunk to sleep on. We didn't have to work only keep our room clean and get our chow from the kitchen and scrub the deck etc. but there were so many to work that it wasn't much to do only gaze into the rolling waters which I did for three days till I had enough. The ship was English used in Peace times to haul cattle etc and our sleeping quarters sure smelt [sp] like it and the grub being Brittish [sp], it was worse mostly goat brought from Australia in the year 200 BC.

"I didn't get sick but I saw more than one boy throw up his socks. We had drills to get onto boats and rafts in case of U Boat attact [sp]. Three days out from England 7 U Boats Destroyers met us to bring us in safe. On July 13 2 U Boats were sighted and depth bombs were fired at it and it sure felt as if a torpedo had hit us square in the middle. I was on deck so just waited for development but the ship didn't begin to sink. I was scared and I wasn't alone. We had to wear life belts [life jackets] all the way across.



German U Boat in WWI

"We arrived at Liverpool, England on the morning of July 15 but didn't get of [sp] till about noon and then had some real coffee and a bun from the Red Cross, and marched through the city to a rest camp. The buildings sure looked odd the structer [sp structure] narrow and the drivers all drove on the left side of the street. The street cars were double decked and taller than long and I sure ex-



Assigned to Company L, 354th Infantry, 89th Division. Dad is #20, his friend, Leo Murray is #16
(photo from Wesselman archives)

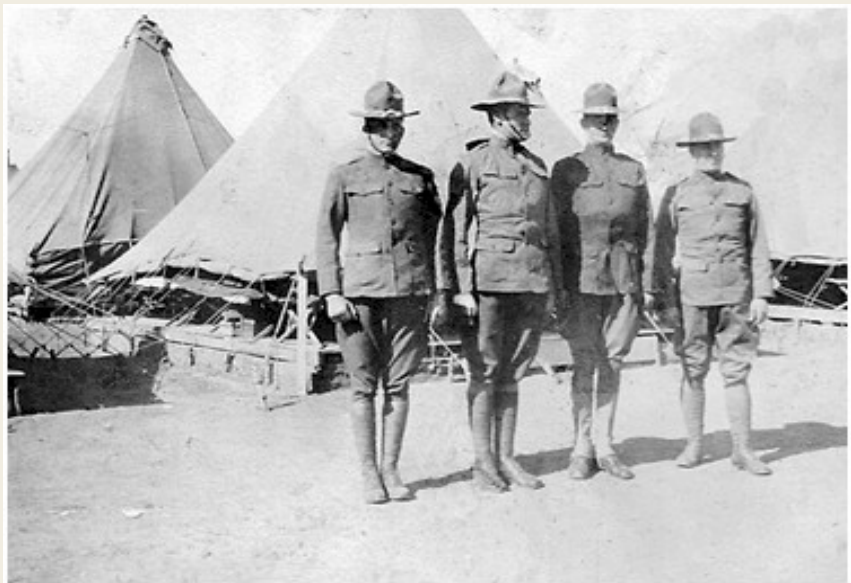
1 Sgt. Jim Hyde	26 Port Catwain
2 Port J. Sherrwood	27 Sgt P. Churnif
3 " Inc. Donald	28 Port Longrie
4 " Sgt Beaucher	29 Chl W. Hulley
5 " Thomas	
6 Chl Jessie Frank	
7 Port Wolosub.	
8 " Robinson	
9 " Johnson	
10 " Curtis	
11 " Huffman	
12 " Heinig	
13 " Marshall	
14 " Herbert	
15 " Praeger	
16 Chl Murray	
17 Port Petroff.	
18 " Henry	
19 Chl Piper	
20 Port Quaw Who.	
21 " Dwyer	
22 Chl Baksholm	
23 Port Berg	
24 Wells	
25 Port Hull	

The back of the preceding picture with a key to the men in the photograph (photo from Wesselman archives)

pected to see them tip over when the brakes were put on. Kids followed us all the way asking for pennies, some of the civilians waived Old Glory and we cheered.

"We didn't like the English as we didn't like their eats on the boat and when we put our own cooks in the kitchen they put them out again. The rest camp we came to were just tents and the weather being cool and wet I sure felt good (nict) [German word for not] and to finish a perfect day we didn't get enough to eat for supper and had to sleep on soft pine boards.

"A days rest and we left on trains, a big bug [important Englishman] made us a welcome speech and we were handed welcome letters from King George to be sent home, which I used for a purpose I wouldn't mention in this book.



We had to live in tents (photo from Wesselman archives)

"We rode clean across England, the little devils made pretty good time (24 men per coach, some train). The Engines had 4 drivers and were about the size of a small US Tender. The cars are coupled together with chains. The next stop was at Winchester. We marched through town to another rest Camp. (Saw a darn pretty girl) Oh those darned rest camps sure made a man tired and they were always getting worse, more men in the tents and less to eat and a man sure needed good teeth to chew their hardtack. There is a large Camp at Winchester but they took us to the last place and put us in tents again.

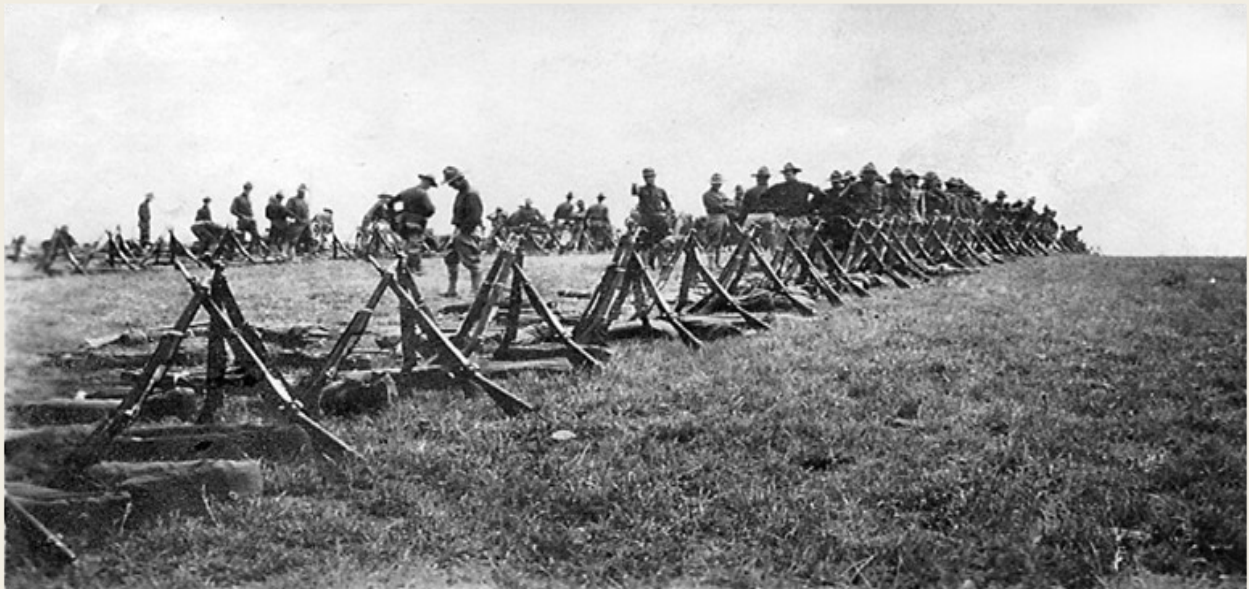
"A little rest of a day and we went back through Winchester, to the train and we were on our way to South Hampton and the English Channel. At Winchester is where the 42nd or Rainbow Division shoot [sp] up the town so they kept us in



camp. While there we left South Hampton on the evening of July the 18th and landed at Cherbourg France the morning of the 19 at 2 o'clock but didn't get of [sp] till after daylight. There we had to carry our Barracks bags from the ship to the train and then went to another so called rest camp. These were all English camps and we were on English rations. The English had a canteen but wouldn't sell any eats to the Soldiers [American] as we would have bought all of them and so wouldn't have left any for the Brittish [sp] Soldiers.

"The trip across the Channel sure was rough and we had a little ship, but it sure did travel some and naturaly [sp] some of the boys got sick, it was cold above deck and below it stank so that a man could hardly stand it but my stomach was pretty hard at that time.

"From Cherbourg we left on box cars 84 to the car and they were small cars. We didn't have room so we could all lay down at once. We traveled 6 days like that. One day we stopped on the east skirts of Paris but weren't allowed to go anyplace. I tell you we all were in good humor as we didn't get enough to eat {...?....} and it was Hardtack and corned Willy. We got a few cups of coffee from the Red Cross along the way.



Rifles stacked and ready (photo from Wesselman archives)



"We went through {...?..} and finally came to the end of the railroad and so had to get off there. Were Japs [history indicates that the Japanese troops only served on the Eastern front so I'm not sure who Dad is referring to here. Perhaps they were non combatants who helped out on the Western front] there and they gave us bread to eat and also got some of our own rations so we had all we wanted to eat for once. From there we took trucks for 8 miles and so at last came to Busson where our Co was located. Say we sure did eat for a few days.

"Then our drilling started again. There we got our gas masks and also took our practice hike 4 [for] about 20 miles with full pack. It would have liked to killed me as the packs weighed at least 80 lbs and we casuals were soft, some had blisters on their feet and my arches sure hurt. From there we went to Muhle in trucks, 32 men to the truck. It was pretty crowded but it only lasted one day and had plenty of rations. We arrived at Muhle at 2 o'clock AM and slept till late the next day.



WWI gas mask

"France sure is a poor looking country in the growing line and all ways. The people all live in villages and have their farms around the out side. From Muhle we rode to Mannonville on a real narrow guaged [sp] rail way (on Flat Cars). From Muhle all the moves were made at night. We were at Mannonville about a week and while there did some drilling but mostly cleaning up the town and it surely needed it, it was filthy. The next town was Nowiant 9 kilos distant. There we were told the

Dutch shot gass [sp] into the town." [Note: Dutch refers to German soldiers. Dad was a first generation German - American, and Deutsch is the word that Germans used when referring to themselves. Dad had real concerns that he could be shooting at his own rela-



Life in the field (photo from Wesselman archive)



tives. Perhaps this is why he generally referred to them as "Dutch" or "Hun" not Deutsch or German].

"It was just a small burg and the first night we had two gass [sp] alarms, all false, just for practice but it sure scared us as we thought they were real. We had had gass [sp] drills at Busson and I sure could get my mask on without taking a breath. We didn't drill here and ever [every] day we could see Bosche [Bosche was a common slang term for Germans in World War One] aeroplanes soaring over and our anti air craft guns shooting at them. Some of them got a few of our balton [battalion ?].

"Our next move was to the trenches. Natural[ly] we moved at night, single file and landed at the Joan De Arc Woods. I was taken on guard the first thing. I had to guard the road leading into the woods. I was 6 hrs on and 12 off, I and some others with one cpl. of the 3rd Platoon. I was told to be kurfil [sp careful] as there were german spys [spies] around and let me tell you it sure was nice to sit out there for six hrs straight and couldn't see your hand before your face. The rest of the boys had to stay in the trenches for 24 hrs at a stretch and then were relieved by others of the boys."



German Albatross fighter

"One day I was sitting on my post, anti aircraft gun was shooting at an Hun [German] plane right over head. I heard a singing noise but didn't know what it was till a piece of shrapnel fell near me. Then I knew the Huns located a French Battrry [sp] close by and sure shot hell out of it, got 5 guns and killed two men. I thought the shells were coming close at the time but later found out they could come a darned sight closer and never hit a man. We were there 8 days and then were relieved and went back to a woods and barracks. While back there the Huns hit an ammunition dump close by and sure scattered us boys. It sure was one grand explosion and grand fire works followed.

*"From there we hiked 20 kilos to Con-
nievillet [sp?]. It was safe from
shells as there was a hill right at the
town. Then we were paid for the
first time in Army life. The Co got a
pay day at Busson but we casuals did-
n't and of course we could use it.
Some of the boys celebrated by get-
ting drunk. We were there over Sun-
day and Sunday night pulled back for
Mannonville in trucks, 40 men per
truck. That was the worst ride I ever
had. There wasn't hardly place to
stand without getting on the other
man's feet. Men sure cursed each other. We got there at 6 AM and slept the
most of the day. Of course some men had to go on KP and others Patrols.*



Destruction of the 89th Div. ammo dump (photo from History of the 89th Division)



No Man's Land somewhere along the Western Front in France

*"We had been in the
third line trenches and
we thought we were
close to the Dutch. From
the Joan De Ark Wood,
patrols were sent out
into No Man's Land and
further. I was on one
but never saw any Dutch.
We staid [sp] at Mannon-
ville about a week and
left one night for a little
town that was all shot to
pieces. Near Beunnie-
coldett [sp?] it was all
shot to pieces too. We
staid [sp] there 1 day
and some of the 3rd Pla-
toon had to stand to in
trenches behind the*

town the Co was in. It rained and hailed in the afternoon and at 7 PM got orders to roll packs and moved to Gas Hollow. There my squad and some more stood in trenches for another 24 hrs and in the morning at 5 AM the Huns shoot [sp] over a barrage. It was my first one and so the shells got plenty close but didn't kill anyone only threw one machine gunner out of the trench. The Bosche intended a raid but didn't get far. We were in the Second line trench now just outside of Fluery [Fleury]. It was all shot down even a large church didn't escape. There must have been Dutch spys [sp] in Mannonville and Noviant as they weren't touched. Only once a plane came over at night and dropped [sp] some bombs that were meant for some guns standing on a track near town.

"In the Fluery [Fleury] trenches is the first time I ever slept standing up. We expected to be relieved that evening but were just moved farther down the trench for another 24 hrs and the trenches were wet and muddy. The following night we could see Dutch moving all around us (imagination) and naturally [sp] a lot of shots were fired and flares thrown. We were relieved by other Platoons of L Co and went back to gas hollow thinking we would get some rest that night but instead only waited for supper and then hiked back to Joan De Ark woods and there the dugouts were all filled so had to flop out in the open in the rain. We had about 5 hrs sleep and then went into the woods and waited for grub.

"In the afternoon we started to make shelter for ourselves and cleaned up a deep dugout as we were told that that, that [?] night the



Life in the trenches



Dugouts in the infamous "Gas Hollow" on the St. Mihiel Salient

Allies barrage would start and we expected to be shelled by the Huns in return. They took 15 of us on chow Detail. We had to carry it about 3 miles to the 2 line trenches. It took us 7 hrs round trip. We had to go around Dead Man's Curve but lucky the Dutch didn't shells [sp] us till we got in the trenches. They were located on a hill and could see us carry chow thru Fluery [Fleury] and down the trenches and they sure followed us as we went along. When we came back from chow Detail the boys were all packed up ready to leave and I had to hurry and get my supper and get ready to go back to Gas Hollow where 200 men of the first Bat [Battalion] were gassed. From the woods to Gas Hollow



Doughboy firing a Lewis machine gun





German soldiers

the roads were all lined up with cannons ready to shoot and there were sure some big ones.

"That night at 1 AM the Allies guns started barking. We were in a shell proof dugout but the 1 - 2 platoon L Co were in the trenches. The guns sure laid over some barrage and at (Sept 12) 6.35 [AM] the Doughboys [American infantry soldiers] were over the top. We staid [sp] Gas Hollow till about 11 Bells [I am assuming this means 11:00 am] as the whole 354 Reg. was in reserve. We went over in squad formation at 9.

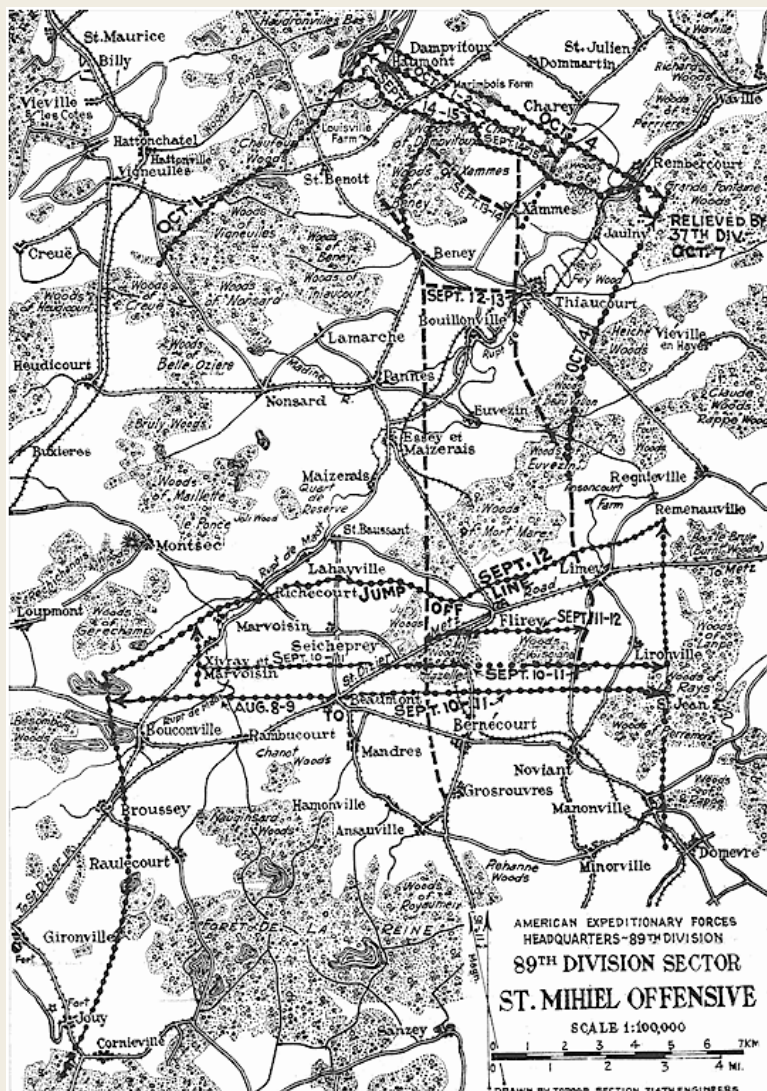
"On the morning of the drive the prisoners starting comming [sp] in and after we had gone on we still met gobs of them. In the afternoon (Sept 12) we reached the Germans 2 line trenches and halted while and there saw our first dead soldiers, one German mine got 2 men and 4 horses and one wagon. We went through the German trenches just to see what we could find and an J Co man kicked a grenade which went of [sp] and hurt 5 men.

"Major Sturs then ordered us to get ready for a paced march just rain coats and rations leaving all towels and toilet articles and that is the last we seen of them. Our blankets were back at Gas Hollow as we started out with light packs. "We walked til about 2 AM the next day and so came to Boullionville {Bullionville} but had to lay on



Gas attack





Map of the 89th Division sector in the St Mihiel salient

a hill side till morning. It was raining and cold and nothing to cover over but our slickers.

"In the morning we ate some hardtack and corned willy and went into battle line and so on into Benrray[Bernay]. We had to go across an open field and a Hun plane came over and naturally [sp] the Huns started to shell us, got 5 men from Co J with one shell. At Bennray [Bernay] we found buns, rabbits, chickens {...?...} and other eats and had a feed. I was put on Beer Guard so the other boys wouldn't get to [sp] much and came pretty near to [sp] much myself.

"In the evening I ploped [sp] on a real feather bed and sure thought I would get a real night's rest, but it wasn't to be

for in the evening we marched about 1 kilo [kilometers] outside of Bennay [sp] and had to dig in. We were getting near the Bosche again and could hear the shells whistling over our heads on their way to Bennray [Bernay] and they killed some men there every day as they just knew where to shoot. We were in the third line trenches only we had to dig our own trenches as the Doughboys and Marines drove the Dutch beyond their own trenches. The drive had lasted 2 days with a gain of 13 miles on a 20 mile front with many of [?] cannons and cuttle [sp?] ammunitions etc. We staid [sp] there 7 days and relieved G Co in the second line. We was cold without blankets and not enough to eat. We had left our mess kits behind so had to eat out of tin cans and some of the boys got sick, but you had to be half dead to get to a hospital.

"All we had to do was hold the lines. We dug some at night and during the day laid low, only chowed early in the morning and in the evening when it was dark. The kitchen wasn't far away. I was on chow Detail. One morning when our guns started a barrage, the Huns shot back and some came mighty close but got the chow dished out OK. One night digging trenches out in the open they started shelling us and we sure dug out for our dugouts. I ploped [sp] about 15 times before I got there as I went down every time I heard a shell coming. The 1 - 2 Platoon were in the 1st line trench and the Huns located some and shot over some 6 inches and I tell you, you could see men running every direction. They got M.J. Govern.

"Third Plt [Platoon] Leautinant [sp] went to Germans [villages] and got some German hard tack. It was pretty good. Japan was on our right and was being shelled every day just like Bernray [sp]. We staid [sp] in the 2nd lines about 7 days and then back to Boullionville [Bullionville] to get deloused. From there the 1 - 2nd Pln [Platoon] went back to the trenches but the 3d staid [sp] at Boullionville [Bullionville] for

MP duty. We were on guard 4 days and staid [sp] a few days on our own hook.

"A patrol of men was sent across to the Germans. We lost 3 men 1 dead 2 wounded our first casuuls. Later one more man was killed in the front lines.



German field artillery piece

A runner was sent from our Co for us to come to the trenches as they expected the Germans to come over and so needed us. We left one evening and the guide got lost and led us all over the country and the roads were being shelled quite often. When the guide admitted he was lost, we just went back to town and the following night our Co was relieved and we all went back to join the engineers to cut wire off houses to be used for wire entanglement at the new front.

"We heard that the whole Div would be relieved and go back near {T...?...} for 60 days and about a week later the Div was relieved. We walked about 15 miles that night and came to Gionsville [sp?] We staid [sp] there till the next afternoon and left in Japs trucks (The whole Reg) [Regiment]. We rode all night going west all the time. I couldn't see the country as it was dark but we passed through Com-mercy [sp]. We got out of the trucks at 7 AM and marched through a little burg and that night moved into wooden barracks. The next day, I and 3 of our Co went to Souilly (Gen Pershing's HQ) to an aeroplane school. Staid [sp] there 3 days and then pulled back for our Co which had moved in the mountains toward the Front. (That was our relief).

"We had to walk quite a ways because the road was blocked. There were 3 French guys ahead of us and one went through the plank road. We walked about three miles and found our Co in muddy dugouts. We staid [sp] there a week and went and took the lines relieving the 32 Div. (The 35 Div relieved us at the St. Miehél [Mihiel] Front). It was dark and raining. When we got there and there were no dugouts, we were all tired out and so didn't dig in and slept till morning. When the chow came, a dutch shell came to [sp]. It killed Pmts Pupmeyer and Pyles and Sgt Ramsey (this was in the Belan Woods) and wounded Pmts Black, Jacques, Cpl Kenyon and then we all dug in a little pit. Miller shoot [sp] his toe. When I had my hole dug I was moved to our outpost and had to dig in again and then stood watch for 2 hrs (me and Pvt Hull).

When we got to bed, orders came to move and we had to pack up with everything wet (I sure was in a sweet humor) [foul frame of mind] but thank God there were some Dutch dog holes.

"We staid [sp] there a few days. A dutch aeroplane came over and threw a bomb at us and naturaly [sp] the Huns started shelling us. A shell entered the Co L HQ building



Souilly France, General Pershing's Headquarters

killing on [one?] and taking both feet of [sp] another. Another lit near the kitchen wounding 2 cooks and one Pvt. Then we moved back to our first place. The 1 - 2 Platoon[s] moved to the 1st live trench and we had carry chow to them. When they went out, a shell wounded 7 men and they kept getting some every day. One shell wounded 4 of the chow Detail. Rumors came that the Dutch were moving back so a daylight Patrole [sp] was sent out to see and 3 more were hurt. Lieutenant Miller was shot through both legs. Pvt Barger and [a] Cpl got DSC [Distinguished Service Cross] for bringing him in. One of our own shells killed one and wounded one etc. We lost 28 men. Death and wounded up to the drive. Orders came one night to make light packs and be ready to move out at 2 AM Nov 1st and we were and we did. Our guns were shooting some but at 3 AM the Barrage started. We were laying in an old trench 3 kilo from the front. We were there about 1 hr and started to the front. We went single file following a path through the

woods. Along the way three men lay wounded one beg [begged] us to take him along but we had other things on our minds for the Dutch were shelling the woods. A dud [a bomb that did not go off] went under my foot, spraining it and threw me down. That put me out of the running. I

crawled in a shell hole and listened

to the barrage both MG and cannons. The Huns were sweeping the ground with Whizz Bangs [incoming German artillery shells]. They came so close I could feel the breeze from them. I lay there about 2 hrs till the firing slackened up and then hobbled back to the Infirmary leaving my gun and pack.



Regimental P. C. of the 354th Infantry at Nammes, St. Mihiel Sector, upon which a direct hit was made by a German "210," killing Chaplain Delman.

Clipping from "The History of the 89th Division" showing the shell damage at 354th Infantry Headquarters

"When I got out of the woods I could see Dutchmen all directions (Prisoners) lots of them without a guard. I staid [sp] with L Co blanket rolls for 4 days, till trucks came for them to take them to the boys. Along the way I saw German guns and dead horses. We rode all day as the roads were poor. The drive lasted 5 days and drove the enemy 30 kilos [kilometers] over very hard ground. I found the Co in a woods near Nouart and was might[y] glad to see so many of the boys as I had heard that the Co was all shot to pieces. I was still using 2 cains [sp] and a split shoe. The Co was then in reserve while the 355 was driving up. The 2 Batt [battalion] was shot to [sp] bad to take the lines.



Loading 89th Division gas patients at a field hospital north of Royauimeix (St. Mihiel Sector), 8 August 1918, for removal to a base hospital in Toul. Stretcher bearers wear makeshift burlap mittens to protect hands from gas-infected clothing of victims.

Photo, with caption, of 89th Division gas casualties from a period publication



"On Nov 11 at 3 AM, the Co got orders to move. I staid [sp] with the kitchen. At 10.30 a Sgt Major told us the Armistice was sighned [sp] and shooting would stop at 10.59 AM.

"I was reading a book at the time and at 10.59 the guns all quit at once. It was to [sp] good to be true. I didn't cheer as I cheered myself hoarse while at Souilly and it was a false report so I didn't want to do it again. It wasn't long till the Co came back. They were turned back just as they came under shell fire. One of K Co men got a shrapnel in the arm at the last minute. The boys looked more like gohsts [sp] than human when they came in, for want of rest and grub but that night we all sure put away some sleep. Everthing [sp] was nice and quiet.

"The next afternoon we went to Nouart and stayed a week at an old Mill (Salvaging) shells and guns and burying some dead. From there we went to Cisse. [Cisse] Were there 10 days and had a foot bath and clean under clothes but didn't get rid of the cooties. I had them since the middle of Oct.



The ubiquitous
"Cootie" or body louse

"The next town was Schiville [sp?] 13 kilos. I didn't hike. I rode with the spare rolls [blankets]. We were there two days and from there started the hike for Germany. The Co hiked and the sick, lame and lazy staid [sp] with the spare rolls. Staid [sp] at Schiville [sp?] 2 days after the Co left and then went to Belle-fontaine (Belguim) [Belgium] [sp] through Stenay (France). Here we sure found a change in the people. They did all they could do under the circumstances. I staid [sp] a day after the Co left and caught up with them at Sinray [sp]? Belguim [Belgium] a few days and the Co left and we were taken to Seaul [sp] Luxembourg. We went throught Arlon Belguim [Belgium]. It is a pretty town and fairly large. We thought that the people would be hostile to us but they weren't, just the contrary. There I met Donald Wood as he was left behind with 1 bat [battalion] spare rolls on account of a strained leg. There were 17 of us left behind for 2 weeks in the mountains.

"The 89 Div was moving on towards the Rhine. All we had to do was eat and sleep, take a walk and hunt cooties [body lice]. Finally the trucks came for us and took

us into Germany. I don't know any of the towns we came through, only Bitburg, Germany. We left Seaul [sp] in the afternoon and the next morning ate breakfast at Bitburg and pulled out at 8 AM. Rode till 2 PM and landed at Pruens [sp?] Germany. It is a nice town of about 3000 {...?...}.

"The Co was 30 kilo farther at Daun Germany but was ordered back to Priun and they arrived the second day I was there. My foot was pretty well by then. We staid [sp] at a large convent on a hill. We staid [sp] there 3 nights and packed up and went to Waxnielor [sp?] (15 kilos) where we arrived on the 21st of Dec 1918 and where I am at the present writing. We drill or hike in the morning and in the afternoon we have games etc. We built a rifle range and started to shoot the 1919 record. Mondays we have Battalion [sp] drill and Thursdays we have maneuvers [sp]. Today the whole Reg [Regiment] went out and took two towns (Jan 22). This all for tonight. I am going to bed.

"Jan 24. Went on a Bat [Battalion] hike with full packs 5 kilos and back over these darn hills just for the fun of it.

"Jan 29. Left Waxnielor [sp?] for Nuerburg to go to the bugle and drum corps, may get transferred to HQ Co.

"Jan 29. Back with my Co. Didn't make good and am glad of it. I don't want to leave the Co.

"Jan 31 - 19 [1919]. Took a Bat [Battalion] hike with full packs to Prunesfeld (9 kilo) and back, just to make a man foot sore and sore otherwise. I fooled them just took a few things.

"Feb. 5 - 19. Left Waxnielor [sp?] at 7.30 for Trier, Germany, 60 kils. We got up at 4.30 and was ready to go at 8.15 AM but had to lay over all day waiting for trucks. It was cold and snowing and didn't get any dinner. When we did start the roads were so slick the trucks always skidded in the ditch. We left 4 of them behind and arrived at Rittersdorf at 12 bells, 18 kilos from Waxnielor [sp?] where we stoped [sp] for the rest of the night in a school house sleeping on the desks and floor.



"Feb. 6. Had coffee, hardtack and corned willey for breakfast and started on our way at 9 AM always stopping to help trucks out of a ditch. Passed through Bit-burg. Coming down a long winding hill near Trier, three trucks right ahead of us got ditched and some behind of us and we had to walk down the hill. We didn't get to our billets in Trier till 5 PM and no beds either just one large room for the whole Co.

"Feb 7 - 19. Are in our billets at last. A squad to a room one bed for each and a stove in each room. There are two Co[s] in this building and room to spare. It was made for soldiers. There are several buildings all stone and fenced in with a stone wall. It is just outside of Trier and have to have a pass to go to town. Last night I wrote ten postals. Today I got three letters from home dated Jan 13 asking why I don't write. I do and often. Why don't they get there. I guess it is just another of Uncle Sams durn foolishnesses. Roumor [sp] says we will be home some time in March. We'll see. I wonder.



In Trier Germany (photo from Wesselman archives)

"Feb. 12 - 19 [1919] "Went on a practice march today with light packs from 1.30 til 11.20 and was inspected by General Wynn (may his soul rest in hell). He gave out orders to scrub out all billets and halls and that there would be no fire in Squad rooms. And it is cold. And then they have the nerve to ask a white man to re-inlist. Our stoves were taken out today and now we can shave with ice water and freeze but the Officers and Sgts have fire but I guess we aren't human anymore. We went through hell and now they are done with us and I guess they want us to be comfortable like hell. I sure hope that if I got to hell I will meet Colonel Babcock there. I sure will make it hot for him. I ought to write home but I am to [sp] darned mad and discusted [disgusted]."

"Feb 19. Went to Trier this evening and saw a show at the YMCA. An Actor sang "My Little Grey Home in the West." It brought sweet memories of home."



YMCA actors entertaining the 354th (photo from public domain)





Doughboy's equipment



89th Division banner

Europe, 1914



Europe, 1919



Maps of Europe before, and after, The Great War



As you will see in the letter Mom wrote many letters to him. While in Trier Germany he wrote the following letter to her. As was customary, it was censored.

A.P.O. Trier,

Feb. 24, 1919

"Dear Friend:

Yours of the 31st of Jan received OK and was surprised to get another so soon. Already get it. isn't very long since I received one from you. Of course the more the merrier and will try and write oftener now as I have quite a lot of opportunity and plenty of material.

Well, Nell, I am still touring the old country. I left Waxwiler the 5th 5 of Feb. We have the whole 3rd Battalion here in one place. It is a Dutch barrack. It is just large enough for one Bn [battalion] but there are several such places. The whole 354 Regiment is stationed here in Trier.

I can't blame those girls for not want to give up their jobs. Yet it is hard for the boys to have gone through all this and then not to be able to get a job when they get back. Maybe you can get some exsoldier to take your place for awhile anyway but don't hold the job for me as I had one try at milking and I am no hog. Once is enough for me. I don't know if I will be home in time for spring work or not. Personally I don't expect to be home much before fall. Now they are telling us that the 89th will sail soon but the 35th will be held here for MP duty. That is about the worst job you can give a doughboy. An MP is hooted by the doughboy every time he gets and of course when we put on our MP badge the others can't tell that we were ever Inft [Infantry].

I haven't much to say for Trier, it is an old city and I don't think I would ever want to be buried here. The streets are so narrow and the sidewalks are just wide enough for one man in places. The people walk in the streets mostly as there is no traffic only the streetcars and American autos. The people carry everything I guess even their coal as I don't see but very few wagons that the people pull them self.

The other night I saw two men pulling an odd looking cart with springs. It had a large basket with handles just like a coffin. I really do believe it was a hearse. I think in Waxweiler they carried them. I saw one funeral from out of town where they hauled the corpse in a lumber wagon.

Last Friday night I was at the Y and heard a Scotchman sing "My little grey home in the West." It sure reminded me of the west out near the Rockies. Say they will sure look good to Yours Truly.

The weather has changed for the worse or better. I guess it is the better, it has turned warmer but those infernal rains have started again. It rains nearly every day. I can understand now why the people have such good roads for if they wouldn't they couldn't pull an empty wagon with two horses.

Say, I never knew that you were married before. You sure must have been by your letter or where did you get the idea that married life isn't all roses. I always thought it was but you see I don't like roses so I never got married.

Is Alvin as fat and sassy as ever? Say this hiking and drilling would have done him a world of good but I am glad he didn't go as I wouldn't wish such a life on a dog as you may imagine. It is not very healthy to lay in them darned dugouts day after day. I don't feel much effect yet but am afraid I will in the future.

Gee it sure will be great to get back home. You people may think we enjoy this but we don't and I don't care who knows it. I can't smoke cigarettes any more for if I do I have to cough so much at night just as if I had consumption. Maybe I have.

I wouldn't mind being there when the dances start at the barn but to tell you the truth I don't expect to be home before next fall and maybe not then. I really don't know why they are holding us and sending Divisions home that never had any fighting and are over here just a few mos [months] or so. It was posted on our bulletin board that 11 Div [Division] had left for the States already and 17 Div left before the 89 so it will be a long time before our chance comes.

Well I will close as it is supper time now and I haven't anything more to say. So goodbye til next time.

Your Friend,

HJ Wesselman

*Co L 354 Inf
AEF Via New York*

P.S.

*Do not put the town on the
Address as I move to [sp?] much.*



The envelope that Dad used to mail this letter—note the censored stamp
(letter and envelope from Wesselman archives)

And now back to his diary.

"Feb 20. Was at the Y again and saw some boxing. Some were pretty good. Tomorrow at 5.15 AM 40 of L Co got to Coblenz [Koblenz], on the Rhine on a 48 hr Pass. I didn't get to go but hope to later on.

"Feb 22. Am going on guard this afternoon at 4 PM. Will be on for 24 hrs, 2 hrs on 4 off and the guard house is full of fleas and cooties so won't take any blankets, although we have fleas and I am used to cooties, only they are so hard to get rid of so I sooner sit up for one night than get my blankets full of cooties.

"Feb. 27. Was on room orderly. It is a snap, only have to mop up the hall after taps (10 PM) but that beats drilling.

"March 14, 1919. The whole Co is on guard in the city of Trier and we all scattered. I have my post in front of Colonel Babcock's Pl [place] and have to walk from 10.30 til 1.00 PM and then am off [sp] for the rest of the day. I heard today that we would sail the first week in May. I sure hope so for I am getting real homesick.



Pvt Hubert Wesselman and friends (photo from Wesselman archives)





Horseplay in camp (photo from the Wesselman archives)

"Mar 19. Came off guard today and celebrated the event by getting a shot in the arm.

"Mar. 22. Was on KP today just to limber up my ol arm I guess. Yesterday we signed the Pay roll. I hope we will soon get paid as I am getting low again.

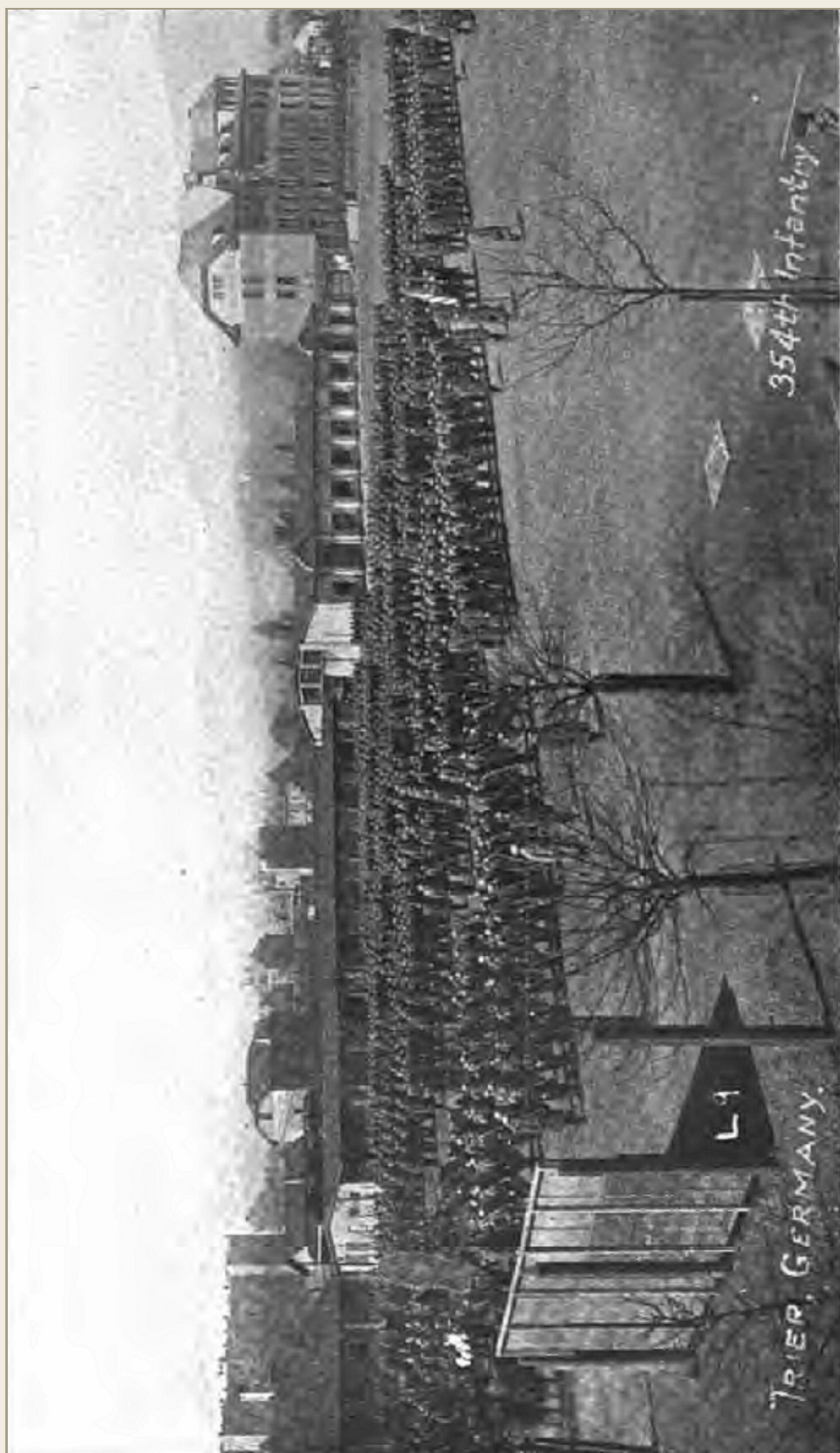
"Mar 27. Left for Coblenz [Koblenz on Rhine River] at 6 AM and arrived at 12 noon. Saw the Rhine and many historic castles and forts. Took a 40 kilo boat ride up the Rhine. There are hills all along the river and all lined up with grape vineyards. Saw the Stoltzenfels Castle, the property of the ex-Kaiser.

"April 21. Go on guard tonight at 4.30 for 24 hrs, 2 hrs on, 4 hrs off.

"Apr. 23. Gen. Pershing inspected the whole 89 Div today and gave us a little talk on the good work of the 89. Secretary of War Baker gave us a little speech. It was to be the final inspection. I sure hope so for I sure love them (nict)[sp nicht - sarcasm]

"May 1. Today was pay day and I needed it as I was flat broke.

"May 5. Received a box from the RC [Red Cross]. They were the best ever. I even got a pair of garters - but have no use for them till I get into civilian clothes. They were from home folks, sent through the Red Cross. Mine was from a baby girl in California.



The 354th Infantry, 89th Division, in the barracks yard at Trier, Germany, in the spring of 1919. Trier was Advanced G. H. Q. and was garrisoned by the 354th Infantry.

General Pershing inspects the troops at Trier. Dad is in there somewhere.
(photo from History of the 89th Division)





Stoltzenfels Castle on the Rhine River

"May 6. Left Trier at 8 bells PM at west Trier. Left Barracks at 3.30 and had to walk about 2 miles with all of our belongings. Some load.

"May 7 France. No Reville [sp] this morning. Had breakfast about 7 o'clock. We were then in one of the worst devastated [sp] parts of France. All trenches, barb wire entanglement [sp] and lots of Rest Camps. We hit Verdun about 10 o'clock AM. It has been shot up bad as all the towns were that we passed along the way. 10.30 Hit St. Mihiel in good shape but the town was not. It was all shot to hell. It was the first time we boys seen that town. At 2.00 PM we came through Com-mercy. It is not damaged at all. Had supper at Gondrescourt [Gondrecourt] at 4 PM and now am on my way again.

"May 8. Had a good nights sleep, stopping at Bourges for Breakfast 7 AM. 11 AM passed through Vierzon . 2 PM came through St. Agnoine [sp?] and at 6 Bells come to St. Pierre Des Corps.

"May 9. Had a good nights rest as we swiped about 6 gal of wine. Awoke in Pennes [sp?] at 7 bells. Had breakfast a little way down the line. At present stopping at LaBrohimiers [sp?]. Arrived at Brest at 6.30. Had supper there and then walked to camp about 2 miles and all up hill with full packs. Talk about a bath [sweat]. All we needed was a rub down.

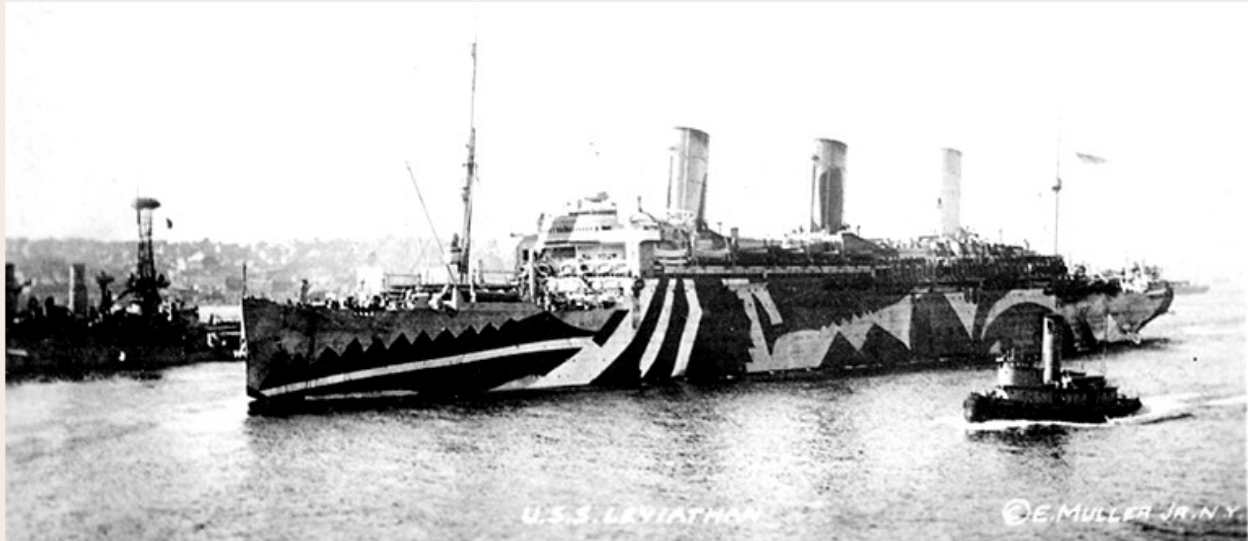
"May 10. Seen a good show at the YMCA by the 132 MJ Bn [Battalion?]."

"May 15. Left camp at 7.30 AM and walked about 3 miles to Brest Harbor and there took a small boat, to the one we go across on. We sail on the Leviathan (Fatherland). Wow, it sure is a monster. A person can get lost easier [sp] than in a city. We sailed out at 8 PM.



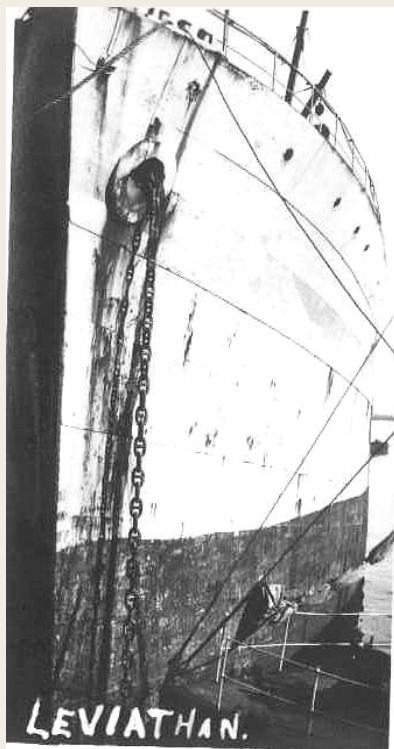
Brest Harbor, France, 1919





The USS Leviathan in Brest harbor coming to take the Doughboys home

"May 16. Passed a ship toot sweet this afternoon."



At the dock in Brest

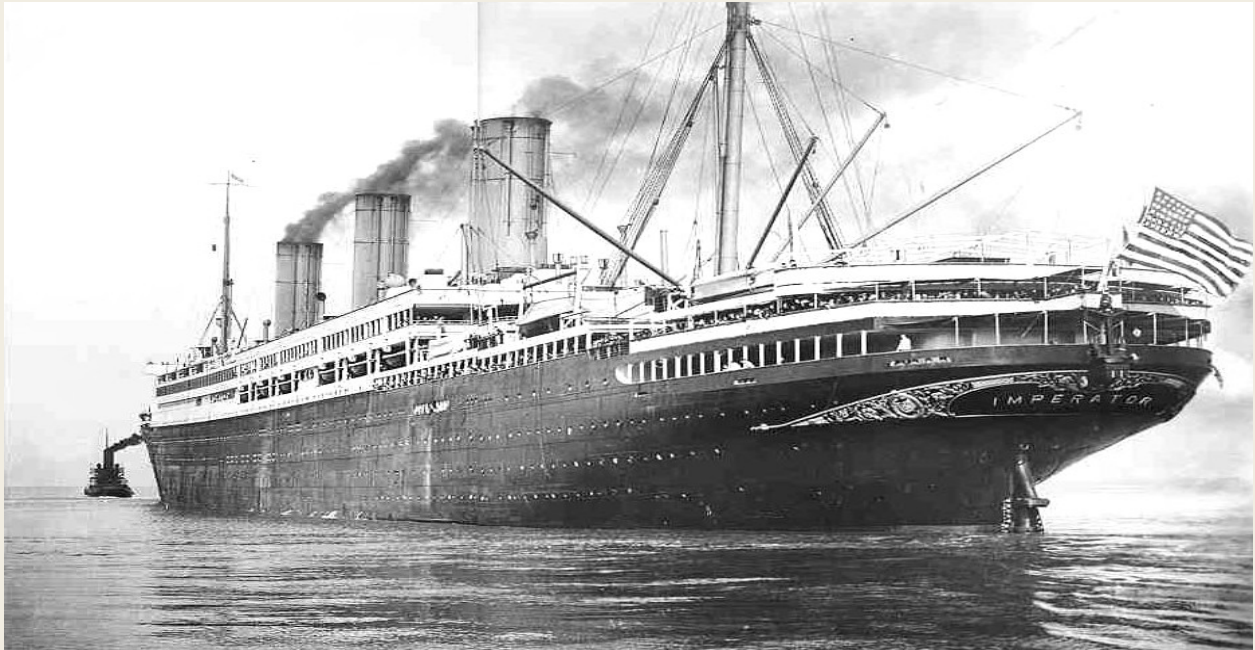


The Leviathan going home



"May 20. Passed the Imperator at 2 AM, the Sister ship of the Leviathan. It had 10 hrs start on us."





The Imperator also taking US troops home 1919



Doughboys on the deck of the Imperator going home, May 1919

"May 22. Anchored at 9.30 this morning. Waiting for the tide. Unloaded at 5 PM and stepped [sp] of [sp] at Camp Upton at 3 A.M. May 23."



Photo # NH 103126 USS Imperator and USS Leviathan at Hoboken, N.J., 1919



The Imperator and Leviathan docked side by side in New York Harbor, May 1919



Troops at Camp Upton New York waiting to go home

"May 28. Left Camp Upton May 28 at 11 PM in Pullmans."



Panoramic view of Camp Upton



"May 29. Stopped at Pittsburg at 7.00 PM for 2 hrs. Had coffee and sandwiches [sp] from the PC [RC - Red Cross?] and pulled out at 9.45. At present at Ft. Wayne, Ind. May 30 9 AM.

"June 1. Arrived at Cheyenne, Wyo. at 5 AM and stopped for 2 hrs. It was a real blizzard [?]."

"June 2. 2 PM Am in the hospital with a case of Poison Ivy. May be here a week or more. May be two weeks till I get home. Damn the luck."

"May 13 [June 13?]. Got discharged at 10 AM and reached Denver at 7 PM. Thank God."

"Finis"



ENLISTMENT RECORD.

Name: Hubert Joseph Wesselman Grade: Private
 Enlisted, or Inducted, 4/27, 1918, at Littleton Colorado
 Serving in First enlistment period at date of discharge.
 Prior service: * None.

Noncommissioned officer: Never

Marksmanship, gunner qualification or rating: † Not qualified.

Horsemanship: Not mounted.

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions: St. Mihiel Offensive Sept 12-

Sept 16-1918 Meuse Argonne Offensive Oct 19-

Nov. 11-1918 Lucy Sector Aug 8-Sept 11-1918 Eusejin Sect. 7/27/1918

Knowledge of any vocation: General farming

Wounds received in service: None

Physical condition when discharged: Good

Typhoid prophylaxis completed May 13-1918

Paratyphoid prophylaxis completed

Married or single: Single

Character: Excellent

Remarks: Service: Honest and faithful. No A. W. O. L. or absence under

G. O. 31 W. D. 1912 and G. O. 45 W. D. 1914.

Entitled to travel pay to: Littleton, Colo.

Signature of soldier: Hubert J. Wesselman

1st Lieut. A. G. D., Asst. Per. Adj.

Commanding

PAID IN FULL \$ 104.50

Basil J. Squier

PAID IN FULL \$ 104.50

* Give company and regiment or corps or department, with inclusive dates of service in each enlistment.
 † Give date of qualification or rating and number, date, and source of order announcing same.

Dad's enlistment record (photo from Wesselman archives)

Honorable Discharge from The United States Army



TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify, That* Hubert Joseph Wesselman
†A.S. 2184667 Private Co. L. 354th Infantry
THE UNITED STATES ARMY, as a TESTIMONIAL OF HONEST AND FAITHFUL
SERVICE, is hereby HONORABLY DISCHARGED from the military service of the
UNITED STATES by reason of † Circular 252 W. D. 1919

Said Hubert Joseph Wesselman was born
in Duelin, in the State of Minnesota
When enlisted he was 25 1/2 years of age and by occupation a Laborer
He had Blue eyes, Brown hair, Fair complexion, and
was 5 feet 7 inches in height.

Given under my hand at Fort D. A. Russell, Wyo. this
13th day of June, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen


H. C. Smith

Major A. G. D., Per. Adjt.

Commanding.

Form No. 525, A. G. O.
Oct. 9-18.

3-3164

*Insert name, Christian name first; e. g., "John Doe."

†Insert Army serial number, grade, company and regiment or arm or corps or department; e. g., "1,620,302"; "Corporal, Company A, 1st Infantry"; "Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps"; "Sergeant, First Class, Medical Department."

‡If discharged prior to expiration of service, give number, date, and source of order or full description of authority therefor.

Dad's discharge papers (photo from Wesselman archives)

Form 1-33 **REGISTRATION CARD** No. 21

1. Name Hubert Joseph Wesselmann Age 25

2. Address 20722 MacArthur Road, Sheridan, Colo.

3. Date of birth May 17th 1892

4. Are you (1) a natural born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention? Native born

5. Where were you born? Dresden, Prussia

6. If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? Farmer

7. What is your present trade, occupation or office? Farmer

8. By whom employed? Self

9. Where employed? Home

10. Married or single (check)? Single Race (specify which)? Caucasian

11. What military service have you had? Rank None Branch None

12. Do you have exemption from draft (specify grounds)? None

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

Hubert Joseph Wesselmann
(Signature of registrant)

REGISTRAR'S REPORT 5-2-2-11

1. Full name as given (specify which): Med. Sec. Med. Sec.

2. Color of eyes? Gray Color of hair? Light Brown No

3. Has person lost eye, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)? No

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as I allow:

W. J. Wesselmann
(Signature of Registrar)

Previous No. 1

City or County Beaumont

State California Date Jan. 21 1917
(Date of registration)

Dad's draft card



Front and rear photos of Dad's Victory medal showing the campaigns in which he served with the 89th Division (photos from Wesselmann archives)

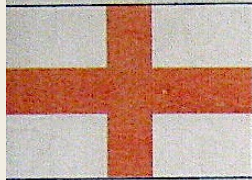




Certificate: Served with honor and wounded in action signed by President Woodrow Wilson
(photo from Wesselman archives)

IN SERVICE OF THE NATION

354th INFANTRY COMPANY L



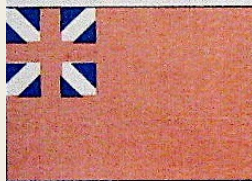
ST. GEORGE CROSS FLAG

St. George Cross Flag, planted on American Soil by Cabot, 1497.



KING'S COLORS

A combination of the St. George Cross of England with that of the White Cross of St. Andrew of Scotland, used in our original colonies.



CROMWELL FLAG

The first English flag to have a crimson background with the British Union in upper left-hand corner; used in America, 1707.



PINE TREE FLAG

First pine tree flag ever used in the colonies, changing from the former British Union in upper left-hand corner to a pine tree.



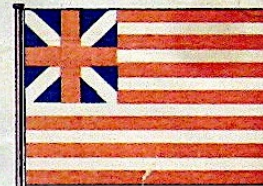
PINE TREE FLAG USED ON AMERICAN VESSELS

This shows one of the many attempts of the colonies to produce a flag of their own. This flag was also used with the motto, "An Appeal to Heaven."



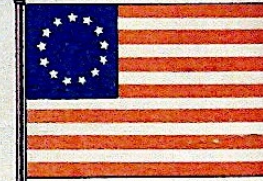
THE SNAKE FLAG

This flag was used in some of the colonies only South Carolina used it with a yellow background. It was used on our first war flag.



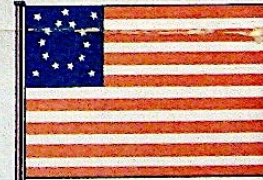
CAMBRIDGE FLAG

Known also as Great Union, Grand Union and Continental Flag, used by the first American Army under General George Washington.



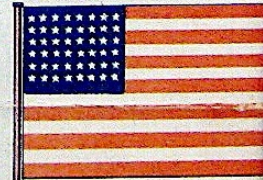
BETSY ROSS FLAG

First American flag to contain stars, said to have been suggested and designed by General George Washington and made by Betsy Ross, widow of John Ross of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



1812 WAR FLAG

Also called the Flag of the Republic. The thirteen stars in the original Fort Mifflin flag were arranged in three parallel rows of five stars each, the field of blue resting on the ninth stripe, but this arrangement was not so popular as the one shown above.



OLD GLORY

Our present flag was designed by Captain William Driver who, in the year 1813, called the flag by that name. The original flag he owned is now in the Essex Institute at Salem, Massachusetts, Captain Driver's birthplace.

Captain Leon W. Weeks		First Lieutenant Bates, Vernon E.		
Second Lieutenants Randolph, Lewis Sauter, Joseph I. Trainor, Leo E.				
First Sergeant Tuley, Vernon J.	Mess Sergeant Mueller, Alfred P.	Supply Sergeant Sharkey, Ernest B.		
Sergeants Vaughn, Gentry W. Straube, Conrad C. Bouillon, Henry F. Evers, George B. Jannin, George J. Mann, Bernard J. McDaniel, William R.				Coffey, Earl H. Buckles, Lafayette Becherer, John L. Hyde, Jim
Corporals Riley, Edward J. Myers, Harry Piper, Charles F. McFely, Henry W. Miller, George A. Nelson, Neil B. Bakopoulis, James Schmidt, Grant Vaughn, Carter C. Saw, Robert H.				Young, Clarence B. Murray, Joseph L. Gray, Henry F. Parks, Andrew C. Malor, Frank S. Lefahol, Alfred Knox, Edward F. Morrison, Charles P. Funk, Jesse N.
Cooks Fink, Adolph Crow, Stanley R. Lehr, David F. Gregory, Luther W.		Mechanics Dowdy, James L. MacCortie, William O. McCrory, Jesse M. Carsten, Emil G.		
Buglers Anderson, Andrew Lewis, Archie T.		Privates—First-Class Hunter, Jack Johnson, Adolph Johnson, Louis Kandies, August Krome, Paul E. Libich, Charles L. Liese, Louis R. Lee, Fred A. Lopp, John A. McMannus, Charles L. McDonald, Timothy J.		
Privates Aband, Sam Arnold, Smith E. Baris, Frank Berz, Fred Beyersbach, George J. Bone, Pearl W. Bosche, Alfred Bruce, L. V. Bullard, Schuyler Carberry, Clarence J. Castro, Minnashah Collins, Arthur Curtis, Steve Daer, Walter Davidson, Roy Dwyer, Timothy J. Farrar, Bud B. Fontana, Francesco Frye, David L. Gholston, Joseph Green, Laurence Heiser, Edward W. Heinig, Edwin C. Henry, William B. Herbert, Harry Herring, Rolfe L. Hildebrand, William A. Howdeshell, Thomas L.		Privates Huffman, John Jasper, John J. Jones, William Jore, Theodore Kerr, Orville G. Klain, John Kline, William Klitany, Joseph Kober, Albert C. Kousates, Demetrios Kriegenhauser, Walter R. Launders, Frank R. League, Russell F. Livermore, Howard Longhurst, Paul Longrie, William J. Lowry, Clyde McConnel, James A. McCready, Harry McGrath, Robert I. McGuire, Augusta E. McKand, Russell L. McNasna, William T. Mallor, Robert H. Marshall, Glen A. McNasra, William A. Meisnimmer, Frank B. Merone, Nick Mischer, Arthur F.		
Privates Miller, Joseph E. Mills, Charles Morris, William S. Murphy, Joseph F. Nolan, Maurice P. Perkins, Arthur M. Petrol, Kate Pholan, Edward P. Powell, Jesse M. Prexol, Fred M. Roach, Alphonse Schaefer, Frank J. Schoenig, William F. Sherwood, John M. Short, Thomas J. Simonsin, Joseph Skinner, Charles R. Syr, Leo Thom, Eugene Thompson, Fred T. Ulrich, Fred E. Waskow, Henry Ulrich, Ervin G. Weinberg, Louis Wells, Paul Wescheimer, Hubert Winters, Joseph H. Wolosak, Alex Wheo, Edgar L.				
Services Overseas, One Year In Action At Lucy Sector, St. Mihiel, Euvezin Sector, Meuse, Argonne				

OUR HONOR ROLL

1st Lieutenant

Ressel, Oscar

Sergeant

Ramsey, James W.

Corporals

Massey, Chas. A.
Brook, Clarence J.

Bugler

McCaun, Edgar

1st Class Privates

Boorman, A. W.
Pienys, R.
Dyke, Alvin G.

Privates

Barnby, John T.
Grenda, John
Lawson, George L.
Lesley, Chester R.
Montoya, P. B.
Pyles, Claude
Weigel, Nick A.

Roster of Company L, 354th Infantry, 89th Division, Allied Expeditionary Force, World War One
(photo from Wesselman archives)

ENLISTED MEN SEVERELY WOUNDED	Name, Rank, Company, Regiment	Date 1918
	Wessel, Edwin L., Corp., M, 354th Inf.....	11- 1
	Wesselman, Hubert J., Pvt., L, 354th Inf.....	11- 1
	West, Sie A., Pvt., E, 355th Inf.....	10-22

Text from History of the 89th Division page 424



Postscript

When Dad started writing his Memorandum, his handwriting was sharp, clear and flowing. As the war progressed, his writing became more and more tense and harder to read which showed the immense stress he was under. The war affected his whole life. The following picture shows Dad in the early years after his return. They show there were times when the realities of the horrors he experienced would surface and he would go off by himself and seemingly relive them.



Dad alone (photo from Wesselman archives)



Mom and Dad were married May 1921. Economics were good. Being farmers, they based their hopes and dreams on high wheat prices coming in that fall. But prices dropped sharply that fall. Things were tough and then in 1929 the Depression hit, the year I was born. Then he, as everyone did, put all energies into surviving. I believe he was able to put his war experiences behind him, or he was able to not allow them to surface, and concentrate on providing for his growing family.

I believe Mom and Dad did not let feelings control their life. Surviving meant being tired did not keep you from doing your job. Farming had built-in guide lines. Surviving winter months was inspiration enough to grow and stock up by preserving meat, fruit and vegetables, and feed for the farm animals.

So it was until the 40's. Dad had mentioned in his diary he was sure the horrible living conditions and not always having enough to eat would affect him in later years. And it did happen. He did spend weeks during many winters in Fitzsimmons Army Hospital, Denver, with pneumonia.

In his last few years, he would disappear more and more. Some of the family members would ask him a question and he would not respond. He joined the neighborhood to help fight a barn fire on a neighboring farm the day before he died. His friends at the fire told Mom later that Dad seemed to look through them when talking together. The next day, March 5, 1953, he took his life with a .30-06 rifle to the heart. He was in our bunkhouse where Mom had found him many times before. He was 61 years old.

The family doctor came out to our house a few days later to tell us Dad had low blood pressure and his brain deteriorated from lack of oxygen. It did help us to know that what we did or did not do did not contribute to his actions.

I was getting married May 1953. I do believe this was the "straw that broke the camel's back" for Dad. The stark realization that my brother and sisters would be getting married also and leaving home was overwhelming. Clarence was his right hand man. If he left and with his own failing health, how could he support Mom by himself. Farmers did not have Social Security and he was never able to put enough aside to buy his own farm.



Depression had not yet been diagnosed as a disease. Medical professions and supporting personnel had not developed to help veterans like my Dad. We now know it is helpful to be able to talk it out. And Dad lived in an era where you carried your “cross” in silence.

May you rest in peace Dad,

Your daughter,

Frances Wesselman Ourada



Hubert Joseph Wesselman
1892 - 1953



